

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated April 16, 2009, Claims 4, 5, 10, 15, 16, 22-26, 33-35, 54-56, and 61 were rejected. Herein, Claims 4, 5, 10, 15, 16, 22-26, 33-35, 54-56, and 61 are amended. New Claim 62 has been added. No new matter has been added. Claims 4, 5, 10, 15, 16, 22-26, 33-35, 54-56, 61, and 62 are believed to be allowable over the prior art of record. Further examination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

Minor amendments to the specification and abstract have been made to correct various editorial and idiomatic errors. A marked up version of the original specification illustrating the changes as well as a substitute specification incorporating the changes are submitted. No new matter has been added.

Replacement figures have been submitted for Figures 48 and 49. In the original figures, reference numerals indicated had previously been used in other figures but do not refer to the same item. Therefore, new reference numerals have been provided for Figures 48 and 49. No new matter has been added.

Claims 25 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 25 and 55 have been amended to remove the indefinite language. The Application respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 25 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn in light of the amendments.

Claims 4, 10, 15, 22, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Constantine et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,500,345, hereafter "Constantine") in view of Hirota et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0010296, hereafter "Hirota"). The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejection based on the amendments to the claims and the remarks

below.

Claims 4, 10, 15, 22, and 33 recite, in part, applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes. This feature is not disclosed or suggested in either Constantine or Hirota.

Constantine discloses a centrifugal separator for separating **sediment** from raw water to produce processed water containing **at least some marine organisms** (Constantine Col.5, Lines 51-55). Further, Constantine discloses the purpose of the centrifugal separator is to remove sediment to prepare the water for the subsequent biocidal step, i.e., the centrifugal separator prepares the water for a later step removing microbes (Constantine Col.5, Lines 47-51). Thus, Constantine fails to disclose or suggest applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes.

Hirota is relied upon as disclosing using an electrolytic cell to produce hypochlorous acid and the hypochlorite ion from water containing chlorides, which is then used to disinfect the water. Hirota does not contain disclosure that would obviate the above-mentioned deficiencies of Constantine. Therefore, Hirota fails to disclose or suggest applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes.

Based on the above remarks, the Applicant believes Claims 4, 10, 15, 22, and 33 to be patentable over any combination of Constantine and Hirota.

Further, new Claim 62 depends from allowable Claim 4. Thus, Claim 62 is patentable over any combination of Constantine and Hirota based at least on its dependency from allowable Claim 4.

Additionally, Claim 62 recites, in part, applying a microbe-separation treatment is

performed by filtration. This feature of Claim 62 is not disclosed or suggested in either Constantine or Hirota.

Constantine discloses a **centrifugal separator for separating** sediment from raw water to produce processed water containing at least some marine organisms (Constantine Col.5, Lines 51-55). Thus, Constantine fails to disclose or suggest applying a microbe-separation treatment is performed by filtration.

Hirota is relied upon as disclosing using an electrolytic cell to produce hypochlorous acid and the hypochlorite ion from water containing chlorides, which is then used to disinfect the water and does not provide disclosure that would obviate the above-mentioned deficiencies of Constantine. Thus, Hirota fails to disclose or suggest applying a microbe-separation treatment is performed by filtration.

Therefore, Claim 62 is patentable over any combination of Constantine and Hirota.

Claims 5, 16, 24, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Constantine in view of Hirota and in further view of Kino (JP 2003-200156). Kino is relied upon as disclosing the use of a slit plate for destroying microorganisms. Kino does not provide disclosure that would obviate the above mentioned deficiencies of Constantine and Hirota. Therefore, Claims 5, 16, 24 and 35 are patentable over any combination of Constantine, Hirota, and Kino based, at least, on their dependency from allowable Claims 4, 15, 22, and 33, respectively.

Claims 22, 23, 25, 26, 33, 34, 55 and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Constantine in view of Horito, and in further view of Browning, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 6,171,508, hereafter "Browning").

Claims 22, 23, 33, and 34 recite, in part, applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes. Browning is relied upon as disclosing a treatment system that re-circulates water and does not provide disclosure that would obviate the above mentioned deficiencies of Constantine and Hirota. Therefore, Claims 22, 23, 33, and 34 are patentable over any combination of Constantine, Hirota, and Browning for reasons similar to Claims 4, 10, 15, 22, and 33 discussed above.

Further, Claims 25, 26, 55, and 56 are patentable over any combination of Constantine, Hirota, and Browning based, at least, on their dependency from allowable Claim 22.

Claims 24, 35, 54, and 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Constantine in view of Hirota and Browning as applied to Claims 22, 23, 33, and 34 and in further view of Kino. Kino is relied upon as disclosing a mechanical damaging treatment unit and does not provide disclosure to obviate the above deficiencies of Constantine, Hirota, and Browning. Therefore, Claims 24, 35, 54, and 61 are patentable over any combination of Constantine, Hirota, Browning, and Kino based, at least, on their dependency from allowable Claims 22, 33, and 34.

Therefore, for at least the reasons presented above, it is submitted that independent Claims 4, 10, 15, 22, 23, 33, and 34, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

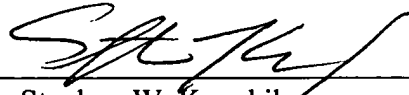
If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining that must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested

that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or to credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 23-0975, with the EXCEPTION of deficiencies in fees for multiple dependent claims in new applications.

Respectfully submitted,

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DESCRIPTION

METHOD OF LIQUID DETOXIFICATION AND APPARATUS THEREFOR

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of liquid detoxification and an apparatus for converting untreated liquid to a clean harmless treated liquid through microbe removal by applying a mechanical treatment combined with chlorination to untreated liquid. The treatment is applied for treating untreated seawater through microbe removal and then storing clean treated seawater in a ballast water tank, for converting untreated seawater stored in the ballast tank to clean treated seawater out at sea, or for converting untreated seawater stored in the ballast water tank and then draining the clean treated seawater.

RELATED ART

When a ship, such as a tanker, carries no oil, seawater stored in a ballast water tank, i.e. ballast water, is converted to clean treated seawater through microbe removal out at sea in order to avoid marine contamination and environmental pollution.

Such a method of the detoxification is disclosed in JP2794537B, JP2002-192161A and JP2003-200156A.

JP2794537B teaches to kill plankton ~~the planktons~~ in the precipitation remaining in a ballast tank by maintaining the temperature higher than the thermal death point of harmful plankton ~~planktons~~ and bacteria for a predetermined time.

In JP2002-192161A, a high voltage pulse is applied to ballast water in a ballast tank. The harmful organisms ~~organism~~ are damaged and defused by directly applying high voltage to them and therefore

causing electric discharge in them, or they are damaged and defused indirectly by the energy of shock waves that are produced by arc discharge produced when the high-voltage pulse is applied across the electrodes.

JP2003-200156A shows a technique for damaging and killing microbes in untreated liquid by running the untreated liquid in a pipe through a slit plate having a number of elongated slit-like openings in a cross-sectional direction.

The method of JP2794537B involves the risk of damaging the ship due to the stress concentrated on a certain part of the ship as the treatment is applied in an empty ballast water tank or in a ballast tank with some water remaining on the bottom. The ballast water tank is heated in a wide area in order to raise the temperature of the precipitation remaining in the tank. This heating process requires more time and labor, and is costing.

JP2002-192161A requires a large-scale apparatus to apply high-voltage pulse. Thus the plant cost and running cost becomes expensive.

The shearing treatment disclosed in JP2003-200156A damages and kills microbes of large size by running untreated liquid through the slit plate but it is very difficult to damage and kill small-size microbes.

Liquid detoxification apparatuses of JP2794537 and JP2002-192161A are provided on the ship, which takes up a lot of space on the ship for installing the apparatus and reduces the space for loading cargo.

Also, ~~with the techniques technique~~ of JP2794537B and JP2002-192161A, ~~it requires~~ require a major modification inside the ship in order to place the apparatus on existing ships and it becomes very costing.

Therefore, in view of the problems of the related art, the first object of the present invention is to provide a method of liquid detoxification and its apparatus that is capable of killing microbes of unlimited size, achieving a reduction in facility and operation costs without any strength drop on the side of treated liquid accommodation body.

The second object of the present invention is to provide a seawater detoxification apparatus that kills microbes of unlimited size, reducing facility and operation costs without any strength drop of the ship and further reduces its installation space, thereby increasing loading space for cargo, etc. Still further, on existing ships, the hull rework cost for installation of detoxification apparatus can be minimized.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a liquid detoxification method for purifying liquid by removing microbes in untreated liquid, comprising steps for: applying a mechanical treatment to the liquid for damaging microbes therein to thereby kill microbes; applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the liquid and injecting the substance into the liquid to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the liquid; and storing treated liquid into a tank for treated liquid.

It is preferable that the chlorination is performed in a electrolytic circulation system in which all or part of the liquid is introduced into a storing tank and circulated through a circulation line between the storing tank and an electrolyzer for electrolyzing the liquid thereby to obtain chlorine-containing

substance.

The present invention also provides in order to implement the above method, a detoxification apparatus for purifying liquid by removing microbes in untreated liquid containing untreated seawater, the apparatus comprising: a mechanical treatment unit for applying a mechanical treatment to the liquid by damaging microbes in the liquid to thereby kill microbes; either one of oxidization means or chlorination means, the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the liquid and the chlorination means feeding chlorine-containing substance formed from the liquid to the liquid thereby to kill microbes; and a tank for treated liquid for storing the treated liquid after being treated in the mechanical treatment unit and the oxidization means or chlorination means.

The detoxification apparatus is preferably composed such that the chlorination means has a liquid electrolytic unit being configured to apply chlorination being performed in an electrolytic circulation system in which all or part of the liquid is introduced into a storing tank and circulated through a circulation line between the storing tank and an electrolyzer for electrolyzing the liquid thereby to obtain chlorine-containing substance.

In the invention, the microbes are mainly those that are toxic or pathogenic or those that disturb ecosystems, such as zooplankton and its cyst, phytoplankton and its cyst, bacteria, fungi and virus. And the above-described detoxification is to kill the microbes that cause seawater pollution or damage to human beings and creatures in the sea or those that disturb ecosystems.

The sodium hypochlorite is most suitable as aforesaid chlorine-containing substance. However, chlorine, sodium, chloric acid, ion thereof or sodium chloride can be used.

The substance possessing oxidizing properties also include

oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the chlorine-containing substance.

Meanwhile, the chlorine-containing substance can be added externally as chemicals.

According to the invention, extinction of microbes of unlimited size can be securely achieved in one system in which the mechanical treatment ~~treat~~-for killing comparatively large microbes, combined with the chlorination for killing smaller size microbes such as bacteria is applied to liquid. The mechanical treatment is to damage and kill microbes of unlimited size including comparatively large microbes, such as crustacean ones, preferably by passing the liquid through a perforated slit plate with a number of small openings whose inner diameter is approximately 0.5mm. The liquid which is mechanically treated can be either chlorinated by adding chlorine containing substance composed by chlorine, sodium hypochlorite, sodium, chloric acid, or ion thereof or sodium chloride, or oxidized by oxidizing substance.

By combining the mechanical treatment and the chlorination, extinction of microbes of unlimited size is securely achieved. And by combining the mechanical treatment with the chlorination or the oxidization, workload of the mechanical treatment is lightened and its pressure drop is reduced and less power is required to operate the mechanical treatment unit, thereby downsizing the unit with the smaller capacity. Further, the input of the chlorine-containing substance is reduced in the chlorination for killing bacteria to which the chlorination is very effective.

With this structure, ~~can be provided~~ a liquid detoxification system can be provided in which microbes present in the liquid can be securely removed and its installation and operation costs are reduced.

Also, when sodium hypochlorite is used as the chlorine-containing substance, with the combination of the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only for removing bacteria, thereby reducing its input for purifying the liquid compared to the method in which sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, preventing the corrosion of succedent units by the sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification, thereby improving the durability of the succedent units and suppressing marine contamination.

In the invention, an electrolytic circulation system using the liquid electrolytic unit is preferably performed as described below.

- The treatment by the system is performed before or after the mechanical treatment.
- The liquid treated in the system is taken out somewhere along the circulation line and introduced to the liquid before or after the mechanical treatment.

With this structure, the chlorine-containing substance contained in the liquid circulating in the circulation line, especially sodium hypochlorite, is introduced into an electrolytic bath, thereby lowering the pH level of the liquid which is supplied to the bath and preventing scale adhesion.

According to the present invention, it is preferable to apply at least one of an active-carbon treatment using active carbons and a metal-catalytic treatment to the liquid after the mechanical treatment and chlorination.

Thus, carcinogens which tend to take place in the treated

liquid after chlorination can be removed by using active carbon for removing trihalomethane.

The aforesaid metal catalyst is preferably metal or chemical compound containing more than one kind from elements of group VIIA such as Mn, Tc and Re, or from elements of group VIII such as Fe, Co, Ni, Ru, Rh, Pd, Os, Ir and Pt.

By applying the metal-catalytic treatment, the HClO remaining after the chlorination is deoxidized by the metal catalyst as shown in the following reaction formula, thereby achieving the liquid detoxification after chlorination.

By applying the active-carbon treatment and metal-catalytic treatment to the chlorinated or mechanically treated liquid, carcinogens which tend to take place in the treated liquid after chlorination can be removed by the active-carbon treatment and remaining HClO can be deoxidized to be harmless by the metal-catalytic treatment, thereby improving the liquid detoxification and purification.

The present invention is unique in that a liquid detoxification method for purifying liquid by removing microbes in untreated liquid comprises steps for:

applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes present in the liquid, the filtration being performed by running the liquid through a filter or the like;

applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the liquid and feeding the chlorine-containing substance into the liquid to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the liquid; and

storing treated liquid into a tank for treated liquid.

Further, the present invention is unique in that a detoxification method for purifying untreated seawater by removing microbes in untreated seawater comprises steps for:

applying a microbe-separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater, the filtration being performed by running the seawater through a filter or the like;

applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and adding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the seawater; and

storing treated seawater into a ballast water tank.

The present invention also provides in order to implement the above method, a detoxification apparatus for purifying liquid by removing microbes in untreated liquid containing untreated seawater, the apparatus comprising:

a microbe-separation unit by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes present in the liquid, the filtration being performed by running the liquid through a filter or the like;

either one of chlorination means or oxidization means, the chlorination means producing chlorine-containing substance from the liquid and feeding the substance into the liquid to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the liquid; and

a tank for storing treated liquid.

According to the present invention, the efficiency for treating microbes improves with the combination of the microbe separation

treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation and the oxidization by adding oxidizing substance into the liquid after the microbe-separation treatment. Also, by selecting an optimal mesh for the filter for removing microbes, comparatively large microbes can be securely captured and the captured microbes can be easily removed by the backwash.

It is also preferable to further comprise a step for applying a mechanical-treatment by a mechanical-treatment unit to the liquid for damaging microbes therein thereby to kill microbes before or after applying the microbe-separation treatment.

With the structure, with the combination of the microbe separation treatment by filtration or centrifugal separation and other mechanical treatments, the efficiency for treating microbes improves, thereby reducing the stress from the chlorination. The present invention also teaches a detoxification method for purifying seawater by removing microbes in untreated seawater, the method comprising steps for:

applying a mechanical treatment to the seawater for damaging microbes therein to thereby kill microbes,

applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and injecting the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the seawater; and

storing treated seawater into a tank for treated seawater. The substance possessing oxidizing properties also include oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the chlorine-containing substance.

It is preferable that the chlorination is performed in an electrolytic circulation system in which all or part of seawater

is introduced into a storing tank and circulated through a circulation line between the storing tank and an electrolyzer for electrolyzing the seawater thereby to obtain chlorine-containing substance.

It is also preferable that the chlorination is applied to all or part of the mechanically treated seawater to be stored in the ballast water tank and the chlorine-containing substance produced by the chlorination is introduced to the seawater before or after the mechanical treatment.

According to the present invention, the extinction of microbes of unlimited size in the seawater can be securely achieved by applying the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes in the turbulent flow caused when the seawater passes through a perforated slit plate with a number of small openings, combined with the oxidization or the chlorination for killing bacteria and the like by adding the chlorine-containing substance in the seawater. Thus a pressure drop of the mechanical treatment unit is abated and its pressure is reduced.

With this structure, a less power is required to operate the mechanical treatment unit for purifying the seawater, thereby downsizing the unit with the smaller capacity. Moreover, in oxidization or the chlorination, the input of hydrogen peroxide or ozone, or chlorine-containing substance such as sodium hypochlorite, chlorine, sodium, chloric acid.

Further, the present invention provides a detoxification system which is capable of extinction of microbes present in the seawater, achieving a reduction in facility and operation costs. Also, in the case that sodium hypochlorite is used as the chlorine-containing substance for the chlorination, with the combination the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively

large microbes and the chlorination, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only for removing bacteria, thereby reducing the input of the sodium hypochlorite for purifying the seawater compared to the method in which sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, preventing the corrosion of succedent units by the sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification, thereby improving the durability of the succedent units and suppressing marine contamination caused when discharging the sodium hypochlorite to sea.

In the invention, an electrolytic circulation system is preferably performed as described below.

- The treatment by the system is performed before or after the mechanical treatment.
- The liquid treated in the system is taken out somewhere along the circulation line and introduced to the seawater before or after the mechanical treatment.

With this structure, the chlorine-containing substance especially sodium hypochlorite contained in the seawater circulating in the circulation line between a storage tank for storing the treated seawater and the electrolytic bath, is introduced into the electrolytic bath, thereby lowering the pH level of the seawater which is supplied to the bath and preventing scale adhesion. It is also preferable that natural energy such as solar battery and a wind power is used as an electric source for the chlorination of seawater.

Thus, the natural energy being used as electric source for the chlorination, the cost for the chlorination can be reduced and the detoxification of ballast water can be achieved with the minimum

engine power of the ship even when the ship is out to sea.

The present invention also teaches a detoxification method for purifying seawater by removing microbes in seawater stored in a ballast water tank, comprising steps for:

applying a mechanical treatment to the seawater for damaging microbes therein to thereby kill microbes,

applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the liquid; and

discharging treated seawater out of the ballast water tank. According to method, by applying the combination of the mechanical treatment and the chlorination or oxidization before discharge the seawater out of the tank for loading cargos, it becomes possible to discharge completely detoxified seawater out of the tank.

The present invention further teaches a detoxification method for purifying seawater by removing microbes in seawater stored in a ballast water tank, comprising steps for:

applying a mechanical treatment to the seawater for damaging microbes therein to thereby kill microbes,

applying either one of chlorination or oxidization, the chlorination being performed by producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization being performed by adding oxidizing substance to the liquid; and

circulating the seawater to the ballast water tank.

With the combination of the mechanical treatment and the chlorination or oxidization, it becomes possible to detoxified ballast water even when the ship is underway, reducing the

detoxification time when the ballast water is discharged from the ship.

It is also preferable that a residual chlorine meter for measuring the level of residual chlorine in treated seawater is provided and the chlorination means control the amount of the chlorine-containing substance to be produced based on the residual chlorine level measured by the residual-chlorine meter.

With the structure, the electrolytic current can be controlled based on the measured residual chlorine level, thereby precisely controlling the feeding amount of chlorine-containing substance such as the sodium hypochlorite to meet a target value, and the treatment cost using the sodium hypochlorite is minimized.

According to the invention, with the combination of the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes and the chlorination or oxidization for killing smaller size ones such as bacteria, extinction of microbes of unlimited size can be securely achieved.

Further with the combination of the mechanical treatment and the chlorination or the oxidization, workload of the mechanical treatment is lightened and its pressure drop is reduced and less power is required to operate the mechanical treatment unit, thereby downsizing the unit with the smaller capacity. Further, the input of the chlorine-containing substance such as sodium hypochlorite, chlorine, sodium and chloric acid is reduced in the chlorination for killing bacteria to which the chlorination is very effective. Thus, the present invention provides a detoxification system which is capable of extinction of microbes present in the seawater, achieving a reduction in facility and operation costs.

According to the invention, by applying the combination of the mechanical treatment and the chlorination or oxidization to

seawater stored in the ballast water tank for removing microbes present in the seawater, it becomes possible to discharge completely detoxified seawater to the sea.

By circulating the seawater stored in the ballast water tank for applying the mechanical treatment and the chlorination or oxidization, it becomes possible to detoxificate ballast water even when the ship is underway, reducing the detoxification time when the ballast water is discharged from the ship.

Also, in the case that sodium hypochlorite is used as the chlorine-containing substance for the chlorination, with the combination the chlorination and the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only for removing bacteria, thereby reducing the input of the sodium hypochlorite for purifying the seawater compared to the method in which sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, preventing the corrosion of succedent units by the sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification, thereby improving the durability of the succedent units and suppressing marine contamination caused when discharging the sodium hypochlorite to sea.

The present invention provides a detoxification apparatus for purifying seawater by removing microbes present in seawater, comprising:

- an on-land detoxification facility being placed on land for killing microbes in the seawater;

- a ballast water tank being mounted on a ship;

- a seawater intake line for taking in seawater into the on-land detoxification facility; and

a seawater discharge line for feeding the seawater treated in the on-land detoxification facility to the ballast water tank;

wherein a microbe-extinction treatment for killing microbes is applied to the seawater introduced into the on-land detoxification facility via the intake line, and the treated seawater is stored into the ballast water tank via the discharge line.

It is preferable in the present invention that the on-land detoxification facility is either one of chlorination means or oxidization means when an on-board detoxification facility mounted on the ship is a mechanical treatment unit, or the on-land detoxification is the mechanical treatment unit when the on-board detoxification facility is either one of chlorination means or oxidization means, the chlorination means producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the seawater, and the mechanical treatment unit applying a mechanical treatment to the seawater by damaging microbes therein to thereby kill microbes,

wherein the seawater treated in the on-land detoxification facility is fed to the on-board detoxification facility via the seawater discharge line, and the seawater treated in the on-board detoxification facility is stored in the ballast water tank.

It is also preferable in the present invention that the on-land detoxification facility comprises:

either one of chlorination means or oxidization means, the chlorination means producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the seawater; and

a microbe-separation unit by filtration or centrifugal

separation for removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater, the filtration being performed by running the seawater through a filter or the like; and

wherein the seawater treated in the chlorination means or oxidization means and the microbe-separation unit is stored into the ballast water tank via the discharge line.

According to the present invention, the on-land detoxification facility is either one of the chlorination means or oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe separation unit. Untreated seawater is treated by the on-land detoxification facility for killing microbes in the seawater. The treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line which connects the on-land detoxification facility to the ballast water tank in the ship. Therefore it becomes unnecessary to install detoxification facilities on the ship such as the chlorination means, oxidization means, mechanical treatment unit and the microbe separation unit. Also, the installation space on the ship for the detoxification apparatus is reduced, thereby increasing the loading space for cargo, etc.

Also, as the seawater discharge line connecting the ballast water tank on the ship and the on-land detoxification facility constituted by one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit or microbe separation unit, can be disconnected and connected to each of the ships, one (one set of) on-land detoxification facility can be used for the liquid detoxification of more than one ship, thereby raising the operation rate of the on-land detoxification facility, reducing the number of units mounted on each ship for detoxification, and also lowering installation cost.

Further, in case that the detoxification apparatus

constituted by one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit or microbe separation unit is located on-land, it is not necessary to install a new detoxification apparatus on existing ships and the hull rework cost is minimized, thereby minimizing the cost for installing the detoxification apparatus on the ship.

A preferable configuration of the present invention is detailed in the following:

- 1) The on-land detoxification unit is either one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means and the mechanical treatment unit and/or the microbe separation unit. The chlorination means produces chlorine-containing substance from said liquid and feeding the substance to the seawater to thereby kill microbes. The oxidization means feed oxidizing substance to the seawater. The mechanical treatment applies a mechanical treatment for damaging and killing microbes present in the seawater, and the microbe-separation unit removes comparatively large microbes present in the seawater by centrifugal separation or filtration by allowing seawater to pass through a filter or the like. With this structure, the seawater treated in the on-land detoxification facility can be stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line which connects the on-land detoxification facility and the ballast water tank.
- 2) The on-land detoxification unit is either one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means. The on-board detoxification facility is one or both of the mechanical treatment unit and the microbe separation unit. With this structure, the seawater treated by the on-land detoxification facility is fed to the on-board detoxification facility and

the treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank.

- 3) The seawater intake line is provided on the ship which has an inlet open to the sea and is connected to the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe-separation unit. With this structure, the seawater treated by the on-land detoxification facility which is the chlorination means or oxidization means, and the seawater introduced through the seawater intake line provided on the ship can be detoxified simultaneously by the on-board detoxification facility to be stored in the ballast water tank, detoxified simultaneously, thereby purifying large amount of seawater by the mechanical treatment unit of a simple structure.

In the invention, the microbes are mainly those that are toxic or pathogenic or those that disturb ecosystems, such as zooplankton and its cyst, phytoplankton and its cyst, bacteria, fungi and virus. And the above-described detoxification is to kill the microbes that cause seawater pollution or damage to human beings and creatures in the sea or those that disturb ecosystems.

The sodium hypochlorite is most suitable as aforesaid chlorine-containing substance. However, chlorine, sodium, chloric acid, ion thereof or sodium chloride can be used. The substance possessing oxidizing properties also include oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the chlorine-containing substance.

Meanwhile, the chlorine-containing substance can be added externally as chemicals.

In the invention, the mechanical treatment unit is preferably a perforated slit plate facing the liquid flow with a number of small openings whose inner diameter is approximately 0.5mm. The mechanical treatment unit damages and kills microbes of unlimited

size including comparatively large microbes, such as crustacean ones, by running the liquid through the small openings.

Further, smaller size microbes such as bacteria are killed by the chlorination means which feeds to the seawater chlorine-containing substance composed by chlorine, sodium hypochlorite, sodium, chloric acid, or ion thereof or sodium chloride, and/or by the oxidization means which feeds to the seawater oxidizing substance.

Accordingly, by combining in a system the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe-separation unit for killing large microbes and the chlorination means or the oxidization means for killing small microbes such as bacteria, extinction of microbes of unlimited size is securely achieved.

And by combining the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe separation unit with the chlorination means or the oxidization means, workload of the mechanical treatment is lightened and its pressure drop is reduced and less power is required to operate the mechanical treatment unit, thereby downsizing the unit with the smaller capacity. Further, the input of chlorine-containing substance for the chlorination such as sodium hypochlorite, chlorine, sodium and chloric acid is reduced as the chlorination needs to be performed only to kill bacteria, which the chlorination is very effective to. With this structure, ~~can be provided~~ a liquid detoxification system can be provided in which microbes present in the liquid can be securely removed and its installation and operation costs are reduced.

Also, when sodium hypochlorite is used as the chlorine-containing substance, with the combination of the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only for removing bacteria, thereby

reducing its input for purifying the liquid compared to the method in which sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, preventing the corrosion of succedent units by the sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification, thereby improving the durability of the succedent units and suppressing marine contamination.

Also, the on-land detoxification unit of the present invention is preferably mounted on a carrier such as a vehicle which moves freely on land.

According to present invention, as the on-land detoxification facility mounted on the carrier is moved close to the ship freely and the seawater detoxified by the on-land detoxification facility can be stored in the ballast water tank in the ship, the length of seawater feeding lines such as the seawater discharge line can be minimized, thereby reducing the power for operating a feeding pump (not shown) and reducing the operating cost for detoxifying the seawater.

Also, when storing the detoxified seawater in the ballast water tank of more than one ship, the on-land detoxification facility mounted on the carrier can be moved freely to each of the ships, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water.

The present invention also provides a detoxification apparatus for purifying seawater comprising:

- an at-sea detoxification facility being placed on the sea for killing microbes in the seawater;

- a ballast water tank being mounted on a ship;

- a seawater intake line for taking in seawater into the at-sea

detoxification facility; and

a seawater discharge line for feeding the seawater treated in the at-sea detoxification facility to the ballast water tank;

wherein a microbe-extinction treatment for killing microbes is applied to the seawater introduced into the at-sea detoxification facility via the intake line, and the treated seawater is stored into the ballast water tank via the discharge line.

The detoxification apparatus of the invention is configured such that the at-sea detoxification facility comprises:

either one of chlorination means or oxidization means, the chlorination means producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes, and the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the seawater; and

a microbe-separation unit by filtration or centrifugal separation for removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater, the filtration being performed by running the seawater through a filter or the like; and

wherein the seawater treated in the chlorination means or oxidization means and the microbe-separation unit is stored into the ballast water tank via the discharge line.

The detoxification apparatus of the present invention is also configured that the at-sea detoxification facility is either one of chlorination means or oxidization means when an on-board detoxification facility mounted on the ship is a microbe-separation unit, or the on-land detoxification is the microbe-separation unit when the on-board detoxification facility is either one of chlorination means or oxidization means, the chlorination means producing chlorine-containing substance from the seawater and feeding the substance into the seawater to thereby kill microbes,

the oxidization means adding oxidizing substance to the seawater, and the microbe-separation unit removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater by centrifugal separation or filtration which is performed by running the seawater through a filter or the like, and

wherein the seawater treated in the at-sea detoxification facility is fed to the on-board detoxification facility via the seawater discharge line, and the seawater treated in the on-board detoxification facility is stored in the ballast water tank. According to the present invention, the at-sea detoxification facility is either one of the chlorination means or oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe separation unit.

Untreated seawater is treated by the at-sea detoxification facility for killing microbes in the seawater. The treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line which connects the at-sea detoxification facility to the ballast water tank in the ship. Therefore detoxification facilities such as the chlorination means, oxidization means, mechanical treatment unit and the microbe separation unit can be provided at the sea and need not be mounted on the ship. Also, the installation space on the ship for the detoxification apparatus is reduced, thereby increasing the loading space for cargo, etc.

Also, as the seawater discharge line connecting the ballast water tank on the ship and the at-sea detoxification facility constituted by one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit or microbe separation unit, can be disconnected and connected to each of the ships, one (one set of) at-sea detoxification facility can be used for the liquid detoxification of more than one ship, thereby raising the operation rate of the at-sea detoxification facility, reducing the number of

units mounted on each ship for detoxification, and also lowering installation cost.

Further, in the case of detoxification the seawater for the ship anchoring at sea, the seawater detoxified by the at-sea detoxification facility is fed to the ballast water tank inside the ship by moving the facility mounting boat provided movable freely on the sea and having the facility thereon, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water.

Furthermore, the detoxification units such as one of the chlorination means and the oxidization means, or the seawater electrolytic unit or mechanical treatment unit, is provided on the sea as the at-sea detoxification facility, thereby minimizing the hull rework cost of the ship and minimizing the cost for installing a new detoxification apparatus on the ship.

- 1) The at-sea detoxification unit is either one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means and the mechanical treatment unit and/or the microbe separation unit. The chlorination means produces chlorine-containing substance from said liquid and feeding the substance to the seawater to thereby kill microbes. The oxidization means feed oxidizing substance to the seawater. The mechanical treatment applies a mechanical treatment for damaging and killing microbes present in the seawater, and the microbe-separation unit removes comparatively large microbes present in the seawater by centrifugal separation or filtration which is performed by running the seawater through a filter or the like. With this structure, the seawater treated in the at-sea detoxification facility can be stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line which connects the at-sea detoxification facility to the ballast water tank.

- 2) The at-sea detoxification facility is either one of the chlorination means or the oxidization means and the mechanical treatment unit and/or the microbe separation unit. The on-board detoxification facility is mechanical treatment unit and/or the microbe separation unit. With this structure, the seawater treated by the at-sea detoxification facility is fed to the on-board detoxification facility via the seawater discharge line and the treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank.
- 3) The seawater intake line is provided on the ship which has an inlet open to the sea and is connected to the mechanical treatment unit or the microbe-separation unit. With this structure, the on-board detoxification facility which is the mechanical treatment or microbe separation unit, detoxified simultaneously both the seawater treated in the at-sea detoxification facility which is the chlorination means or oxidization means, and the seawater fed from the inlet of the seawater intake line provided on the ship and stores the detoxified seawater in the ballast water tank, thereby purifying large amount of seawater by the mechanical treatment unit of a simple structure.

In the present invention as described above, the chlorination means is an electrolytic unit being configured to apply chlorination to seawater. The chlorination is performed in an electrolytic circulation system in which all or part of the seawater is introduced into a storing tank and circulated through a circulation line between the storing tank and an electrolyzer for electrolyzing the seawater thereby to obtain chlorine-containing substance.

In the invention, the electrolytic circulation system using the electrolytic unit is preferably performed as described below.

• The treatment by the system is performed before or after the mechanical treatment.

• The liquid treated in the system is taken out somewhere along the circulation line and introduced to liquid before or after the mechanical treatment.

With this structure, the chlorine-containing substance contained in the liquid circulating in the circulation line, especially sodium hypochlorite, is introduced into an electrolytic bath, thereby lowering the pH level of the liquid which is supplied to the bath and preventing scale adhesion.

According to the present invention, the on-land detoxification facility is either one of the chlorination means or oxidization means or the mechanical treatment unit and is provided on land. Untreated seawater is treated by the on-land detoxification facility and the seawater treated in the on-land detoxification facility is stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line. Therefore detoxification facilities such as the chlorination means, oxidization means and mechanical treatment unit can be provided on land and need not be mounted on the ship. Also, the installation space on the ship for the detoxification apparatus is reduced, thereby increasing the loading space for cargo, etc.

Also, as the seawater discharge line connecting the ballast water tank on the ship and the on-land detoxification facility can be disconnected and connected to each of the ships, one (one set of) on-land detoxification facility can be used for the liquid detoxification of more than one ship, thereby raising the operation rate of the on-land detoxification facility, reducing the number of units mounted on each ship for detoxification, and also lowering installation cost.

Furthermore, the detoxification units such as one of the chlorination means and the oxidization means and mechanical treatment unit is provided on land as the on-land detoxification facility, thereby minimizing the hull rework cost of the ship and minimizing the cost for installing a new detoxification apparatus on the ship.

The present invention also proposes to provide a carrier such as vehicle to mount the on-land detoxification facility thereon. As the carrier is configured to move freely on land so that the on-land detoxification facility can be moved closer to the ship freely to store the treated seawater in the ballast water tank in the ship, the length of seawater feeding lines can be minimized, thereby reducing the power for operating a feeding pump (not shown) and reducing the operating cost for detoxifying the seawater.

Also, in the case of storing the detoxified seawater in the ballast water tank of more than one ship, the on-land detoxification facility mounted on the carrier can be moved freely to each of the ships, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water.

According to the present invention, the at-sea detoxification facility is either one of the chlorination means or oxidization means, or the mechanical treatment unit. Untreated seawater is treated by the at-sea detoxification facility for killing microbes in the seawater. The treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank via the seawater discharge line. Therefore detoxification units for detoxifying seawater can be provided at the sea and need not be mounted on the ship. Also, the installation space on the ship for the detoxification units is reduced, thereby increasing the loading space for cargo, etc.

Also, as the seawater discharge line connecting the ballast

water tank on the ship and the at-sea detoxification facility provided on the sea, can be disconnected and connected to each of the ships, one (one set of) at-sea detoxification facility can be used for the liquid detoxification of more than one ship, thereby raising the operation rate of the at-sea detoxification facility, reducing the number of units mounted on each ship for detoxification, and also lowering installation cost.

Further, in the case of detoxifying the seawater of the ship anchoring at the sea, the seawater detoxified by the at-sea detoxification facility is fed to the ballast water tank inside the ship by moving the facility provided afloat and movable on the sea closer to the ship, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water whether the ship is anchored at a pier or offshore.

Furthermore, the detoxification units is provided on the sea and not on the ship as the at-sea detoxification facility, thereby minimizing the hull rework cost of the ship and minimizing the cost for installing a new detoxification apparatus on the ship.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing a detoxification apparatus for ship ballast water to explain the 1st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 2nd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain

the 3rd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 4th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 5th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 6th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 7th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 8th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 9th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the ~~10th~~ 10th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the ~~11th~~ 11th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 12th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the ~~13th~~ 13th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 14 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 14th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 15 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 15th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 16 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 16th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 17 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 17th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 18 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain

the 18th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 19 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 19th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 20 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 20th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 21st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 21st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 23 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 23rd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 24 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 24th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 25 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 25th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 26 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 26th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 27 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 27th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 28 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 28th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 29 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 29th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 30 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 30th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 31 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 31st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 32 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 32nd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 33 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain

the ~~3rd~~ 33rd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 34 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 34th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 35 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 35th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 36 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 36th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 37 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 37th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 38 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 38th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 39 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the ~~39th~~ 39th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 40 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 40th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 41 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 41st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 42 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 42nd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 43 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 43rd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 44 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 44th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 45 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 45th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 46 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 46th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 47 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.1 to explain the 47th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 48 is the first flow diagram showing main steps of each

of above-mentioned embodiments.

FIG. 49 is the second flow diagram showing main steps of each of above-mentioned embodiments.

FIG. 50 is a block diagram showing a detoxification apparatus for ship ballast water to explain the 48th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 51 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 49th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 52 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 50th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 53 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 51st preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 54 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 52nd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 55 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 53rd preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 56 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 54th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 57 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 55th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 58 is a block diagram corresponding to FIG.50 to explain the 56th preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 59 is a flow diagram showing a structure of a microbe mounting unit .

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments are explained, referring to the drawings. Regarding the elements described in the preferred embodiments, their sizes, material qualities, shapes, relative arrangements and so on, should not be understood to limit the present

invention as they are, even if they are concretely specified.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing a detoxification apparatus for ship ballast water to explain the 1st preferred embodiment of the present invention. FIGS. 2 to 47 show block diagrams of the 2nd to 47th preferred embodiments corresponding to FIG. 1. FIG. 47 and FIG. 48 are first and second flow diagrams showing main steps of each of above-mentioned preferred embodiments.

FIG. 1 illustrating the 1st embodiment shows a screen 1 for filtering foreign objects, such as trash, from untreated seawater and capturing the objects, and a pump 2 for delivering the seawater to a treatment line 6. A mechanical treatment unit 3 is provided for damaging microbes which were not captured by the screen 2, thereby killing microbes in the seawater.

The mechanical treatment unit 3 is preferably a perforated-plate treatment unit, in which is provided a plate with a number of small openings facing the flow of seawater and microbes in the seawater are damaged by a turbulent flow of the seawater caused when passing through the perforated plate, thereby killing microbes present in the seawater. The mechanical treatment unit should not be limited to a perforated-plate treatment unit as long as a unit functions to damage microbes in seawater to kill microbes.

A seawater electrolytic unit 4 electrolyzes the seawater which has been treated mechanically by the mechanical treatment unit 3, for producing sodium hypochlorite by decomposing the seawater by an electric current. The sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is injected into the treatment line 6 and then the treated seawater is stored in a ballast water tank 5.

In the 1st- preferred embodiment, the untreated liquid passes through the screen 1 for filtering off foreign objects such as trash,

thereby capturing the foreign objects, and fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 by the pump 2 via the treatment line 6.

The mechanical treatment unit 3 damages microbes in the seawater by allowing the seawater to pass through the perforated plate, thereby killing microbes. All or part of the seawater treated mechanically by the mechanical treatment unit 3 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 via an extraction line 8. The seawater electrolytic unit 4 electrolyzes the seawater to sodium hypochlorite.

The sodium hypochlorite is injected in the treatment line 6 upstream of the mechanical treatment unit 3 via an injection line 9 shown with a solid line, or in the treatment line 6 downstream of the mechanical treatment unit 3 via an injection line 10 shown with a broken line. Thus, the remaining microbes in the seawater can be killed by injecting the sodium hypochlorite.

Alternatively, the seawater can be circulated via a circulation line 10a to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for treating the seawater only mechanically.

Thus, the seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing microbes in the seawater, and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for killing microbes present in the seawater by injecting the sodium hypochlorite which was produced from the seawater in the unit 4. The detoxified seawater is stored in the ballast water tank.

In this embodiment, the microbes are mainly those that are toxic or pathogenic or those that disturb ecosystems, such as zooplankton and its cyst, phytoplankton and its cyst, bacteria, fungi and virus.

Detoxification means, in the above description, to kill microbes that cause seawater pollution or damage to human beings and creatures in the sea or those that disturb ecosystems.

The sodium hypochlorite in the above embodiment is most suitable as aforesaid chlorine-containing substance, however, chlorine, sodium, chloric acid, ion thereof or sodium chloride can be used.

The substance possessing oxidizing properties also includes oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the chlorine-containing substance.

Meanwhile, the chlorine-containing substance can be added externally as chemicals.

According to the embodiment, the extinction of microbes of every size can be positively achieved by applying the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes in the turbulent flow caused when the seawater passes through the perforated plate, combined with the chlorination for killing bacteria and the like by adding the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4. Thus a pressure drop in the mechanical treatment unit 3 is decreased and the load for operating the unit 3 is reduced.

With this structure, less power is needed to operate the mechanical treatment unit 3 for purifying the seawater, thereby downsizing the unit with smaller capacity of driving device. Moreover, the input of the sodium hypochlorite can be reduced in the chlorination by injecting sodium hypochlorite produced by the electrolytic unit 4 into the seawater, for all that is needed is to kill mainly bacteria to which chlorination is very effective.

Also, with the combination of the chlorination for killing bacteria by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 to the seawater, and the mechanical treatment by the mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing comparatively large microbes, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only

for removing bacteria, so that the input of sodium hypochlorite can be reduced compared to the case sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, corrosion of succedent units by residual sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification is suppressed, durability of the succedent units is improved, and marine contamination caused when discharging the sodium hypochlorite to sea can be suppressed.

In Figs.2-47 illustrating 2nd to 47th embodiments respectively ~~correspondingly~~, parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In the 2nd embodiment illustrated in FIG.2, a residual chlorine meter 11 measures the residual chlorine level and input the measured chlorine level into the seawater electrolytic unit 4 after the mechanical treatment by the mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing comparatively large microbes and the chlorination by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for killing bacteria by adding to the seawater via a treatment line 6 the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4.

In the 2nd embodiment, the residual chlorine meter 11 measures the level of residual chlorine in the seawater which has been treated mechanically and chlorinated. The measured residual chlorine level is inputted to the seawater electrolytic unit 4, and the seawater electrolytic unit 4 controls electrolytic current so as to control the amount of the sodium hypochlorite to be produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4.

According to the 2nd embodiment, the seawater electrolytic unit 4 controls electrolytic current based on the measured residual chlorine level so as to control the amount of the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4, thereby precisely

controlling the input of the sodium hypochlorite to meet a target value, and the treatment cost using the sodium hypochlorite is minimized.

The rest of the structure is the same as in the 1st embodiment. The parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In FIG.3 illustrating the 3rd embodiment, in addition to or without the mechanical treatment and chlorination as described in the 1st embodiment, a chlorination is applied by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 by circulating the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 via circulation lines 13,14 and utilizing the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4, thereby killing bacteria present in the seawater.

Further, according to the 3rd embodiment, natural energy such as solar battery and a wind power 12 is used as an electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4.

With this structure, the natural energy being used as electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4, the cost for the chlorination utilizing the sodium hypochlorite can be reduced and the detoxification of ballast water using the electrolytic unit 4 can be achieved with the minimum engine power of the ship when the ship is out to sea.

The rest of the structure is the same as in the 1st embodiment. The parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In the 4th embodiment illustrated in FIG.4, the electrolytic unit 4 is an electrolytic unit circulation system.

FIG.4 shows a storage tank 43, a pump 44, a electrolytic bath 41 and a electric power unit 42 for controlling electrical current of the electrolytic bath 41. The seawater used for chlorination is

fed to the storage tank 43 via the extraction line 8.

A circulation line 49 is formed to circulate the seawater in the storage tank 43 to the electrolytic bath 41 via the pump 44 and back to the tank 43. Sodium hypochlorite is produced from the seawater in the electrolytic bath 41, and the sodium hypochlorite being injected into the treatment line 6 shown in FIG.1 via the injection line 9 (or the injection line 10 shown in FIG.1). Open-close valves 45 and 46 are also shown. ~~45 and 46 are open-close valves.~~

The sodium hypochlorite is injected into the treatment line 6 in the upstream of the mechanical treatment 3 via an injection line 9, or in the treatment line 6 in the downstream of the mechanical treatment 3 via an injection line 10 as is in the 1st embodiment.

The seawater may be chlorinated in the circulation type electrolyzer system before or after mechanical treatment, and the produced sodium hypochlorite may be used for killing bacteria in the seawater.

According to the 4th embodiment, the sodium hypochlorite contained in the seawater circulating in the circulation line 47, is fed to the electrolytic bath 41, so the pH level of the seawater supplied to the bath 41 is lowered, and as a result adhesion of scale to the electrolytic bath 41 is prevented.

As for the rest, the structure is the same as that of the 1st embodiment. The parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In the 5th embodiment illustrated in FIG.5, there provided are a treatment line 6 and a filter 20 in place of the mechanical treatment unit 3 of the previous embodiments. 21 is a backwash line and 22 is an open-close valve to control the opening of the backwash line 21.

In the 5th embodiment, large microbes present in the seawater can be removed by running the seawater through the filter 20. The sodium hypochlorite is injected into the treatment line 6 either upstream or downstream of the filter 20 via an injection line 9 or 10 in a similar way as the 1st embodiment. Thus, remaining microbes in the seawater can be killed by injecting the sodium hypochlorite. According to the 5th embodiment, by selecting an optimal mesh for the filter 20 for removing microbes, comparatively large microbes can be securely captured and the captured microbes can be easily removed by utilizing the backwash of the backwash line 21.

The rest of the structure is the same as in the 1st embodiment. The parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In the 6th embodiment illustrated in FIG.6, there provided is the same mechanical treatment unit 3 as of the previous embodiments located either in the downstream or in the upstream of the filter 20.

According to the 6th embodiment, by the filtration of the filter 20 combined with the mechanical treatment of the mechanical treatment unit 3, the treatment efficiency of microbes improves and the stress from chlorination on the downstream side decreases.

The rest of the structure is the same as in the 5th embodiment. The parts shown in the first embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

It is also preferable that a centrifugal separator (not shown in figures) is used for separating and removing microbes from the seawater by centrifugalization instead of the filter 20.

Alternatively, in each of aforementioned embodiments, besides the chlorination, oxidization (not shown in figures) can be performed by adding oxidizing substance to the seawater. The

oxidizing substance such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone besides the aforementioned chlorine-containing substance can be used.

The following embodiments comprise different means but share the same effect of extinction and sterilization of microbes in seawater.

In the 7th embodiment illustrated in FIG.7, the seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit for killing microbes in the seawater before or after being chlorinated for killing bacteria by injecting chlorine-containing substance to the untreated seawater from a chlorine-containing substance injection unit 30, and then is stored in the ballast water tank 5.

The chlorine-containing substance is preferably composed by chlorine, sodium hypochlorite, sodium chlorite, chloric acid, or their ions or sodium chloride. The sodium hypochlorite is the most preferable among them.

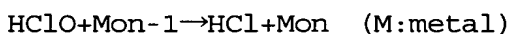
In the 8th embodiment illustrated in FIG.8, the untreated seawater is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and then to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for treating mechanically and stored in the ballast water tank 5.

In the 9th embodiment illustrated in FIG.9, in reverse order from the 8th embodiment, the untreated liquid is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and stored in the ballast water tank 5.

In the 10th embodiment illustrated in FIG.10, after the chlorination by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment by the mechanical treatment unit 3, the seawater is fed to a metal-catalytic treatment unit 31 for metal-catalyzing and then to an active carbon treatment unit 32 for removing trihalomethane and is stored in the ballast water tank 5.

The aforesaid metal catalyst is preferably metal or chemical compound containing more than one kind from elements of VIIA group such as Mn, Tc and Re, or elements of VIII group such as Fe, Co, Ni, Ru, Rh, Pd, Os, Ir and Pt.

With this structure, the remaining HClO can be deoxidized by the metal catalyst as shown in the following reaction formula, thereby achieving the liquid detoxification after chlorination.



Carcinogens tend to take place in the treated liquid after chlorination. By using active carbon for removing trihalomethane, the carcinogens can be removed.

According to the 10th embodiment, the carcinogens are removed from the chlorinated liquid by using the active carbon, and HClO is deoxidized to be harmless, thereby improving the liquid detoxification and purification.

In the 10th embodiment, after removing trihalomethane by the active-carbon treatment unit 32, the treated seawater may be fed to the metal-catalytic treatment unit 31 for the metal-catalyzing. Alternatively, either one of the treatments may be applied solely.

In the 11th embodiment illustrated in FIG.11, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and then to the mechanical treatment unit for the mechanical treatment, thereby killing microbes or bacteria present in the seawater for liquid detoxification as with the 1st embodiment, and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 12th embodiment illustrated in FIG.12, the seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing microbes in the seawater before or after the chlorination for killing bacteria by injecting chlorine-containing substance to the untreated seawater

from a chlorine-containing substance injection unit 30 as with the 7th embodiment, and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 13th embodiment illustrated in FIG.13, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and then to the mechanical treatment unit for mechanical treatment, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater for detoxifying seawater as with the 8th embodiment (FIG.8), and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 14th embodiment illustrated in FIG.14, in reverse order from the 13th embodiment, the seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment, and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination as with the 9th embodiment (FIG.9), thereby killing microbes and bacteria in the seawater, and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 15th embodiment illustrated in FIG.15, the seawater is fed to a catalytic treatment unit 31 for metal-catalyzing after being chlorinated by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and treated mechanically by the mechanical treatment unit 3 as with the 10th embodiment (FIG.10), and further the treated seawater is fed to an active carbon treatment unit 32 for removing trihalomethane, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater for liquid detoxification. The detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 16th embodiment illustrated in FIG.16, a residual chlorine meter 11 measures the level of residual chlorine, i.e. chloride concentration in the treated seawater, after the untreated liquid stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination as with the 2nd embodiment. The electrolytic current of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is

controlled based on the measured residual chlorine level so as to control the amount of the sodium hypochlorite to be produced by the seawater electrolytic unit, thereby killing microbes and bacteria for liquid detoxification and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 17th embodiment illustrated in FIG.17, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to a filter 20 provided on a treatment line (~~a 21-backwash line~~, 21 and an ~~22-open-close valve 22~~ for controlling the opening of the backwash line 21) as with the 5th embodiment (FIG.5). Large microbes present in the seawater can be removed by running the seawater through the filter 20. The sodium hypochlorite produced from the seawater by the seawater electrolytic unit is injected into the treatment line either upstream or downstream of the filter 20, thereby killing bacteria for liquid detoxification and the detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 18th embodiment illustrated in FIG.18, the seawater is fed to the filter 20 and then to the mechanical treatment unit 3 which is provided in the downstream of the filter 20, thereby killing microbes and bacteria for liquid detoxification. The detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 19th embodiment illustrated in FIG.19, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and is fed to the mechanical treatment unit for the mechanical treatment, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater as with the 11th embodiment (FIG.11), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

This structure enables the detoxification of the ballast water stored in the ballast water tank 5 when the ship is underway, reducing

the detoxification time or even omitting the detoxification process when the ballast water is discharged from the ship. The 12th to 25th embodiments as described below share the same effect as the foregoing embodiments.

In the 20th embodiment illustrated in FIG.20, the seawater stored in the tank 5 is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment before or after the ~~he~~-chlorination by the chlorine-containing substance injection unit 30 for injecting chlorine-containing substance to the seawater, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater as with the 12th embodiment (FIG.12), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 21st embodiment illustrated in FIG.21, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and then to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment, thereby killing microbes or bacteria present in the seawater as with the 13th embodiment (FIG.13), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 22nd embodiment illustrated in FIG.22, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater as with the 14th embodiment (FIG.14), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 23rd embodiment illustrated in FIG.23, after the chlorination by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and the mechanical treatment by the mechanical treatment unit 3, the seawater is fed to a metal-catalytic treatment unit 31 for metal-catalyzing and to

a active carbon treatment unit 32 for removing trihalomethane, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater as with the 15th embodiment (FIG.15), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 24th embodiment illustrated in FIG.24, the residual chlorine meter 11 measures the level of residual chlorine, i.e. chloride concentration in the treated seawater after the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is mechanical-treated by the mechanical-treatment unit and chlorinated by the seawater electrolytic unit by injecting sodium hypochlorite. The electrolytic current of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is controlled based on the measured residual chlorine level so as to control the amount of the sodium hypochlorite to be produced by the seawater electrolytic unit, thereby killing microbes and bacteria present in the seawater as with the 16th embodiment (FIG.16), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 25th embodiment illustrated in FIG.25, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to a filter 20 provided on a treatment line (21:backwash line, 22:open-close valve for controlling the opening of the backwash line 21), thereby removing large microbes present in the seawater. And the sodium hypochlorite produced from the seawater by the seawater electrolytic unit is injected into the treatment line either upstream or downstream of the filter 20, thereby killing bacteria for liquid detoxification as with the 17th embodiment (FIG.17). The seawater is detoxified by circulating seawater to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 26th embodiment illustrated in FIG.26, the seawater is fed to the filter 20 and then to the mechanical treatment unit 3 provided downstream of the filter for the mechanical treatment,

thereby killing microbes and bacteria for liquid detoxification as with the 18th embodiment (FIG.18), and the seawater is detoxified by circulating to the ballast water tank 5 repeatedly.

In the 27th embodiment illustrated in FIG.27, the untreated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 and then to the ballast water tank 5, and further to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing microbes and bacteria in the seawater. The seawater circulates between the tank 4 and electrolytic unit 4 for the detoxification.

In the 28th embodiment illustrated in FIG.28, the untreated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment and stored in the ballast water tank 5. And the chlorine-containing substance injection unit 30 injects chlorine-containing substance to the seawater stored in the tank 5, thereby detoxifying the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5.

In the 29th embodiment illustrated in FIG.29, a residual chlorine meter 11 measures the level of residual chlorine, i.e. chloride concentration in the treated seawater after the mechanical treatment by the mechanical-treatment unit 3 and storing in the ballast water tank 5 and then chlorinating the seawater stored in the tank 5 by the seawater electrolytic unit 4. The electrolytic current of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is controlled based on the measured residual chlorine level so as to control the amount of the sodium hypochlorite to be produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4. Thus, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is detoxified.

In the 30th embodiment illustrated in FIG.30, the untreated seawater is fed to the filter 20 for separating microbes, thereby removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater and

stored in the ballast water tank 5. The seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is detoxified by circulating seawater between the tank 5 and electrolytic unit 4.

In the 31st embodiment illustrated in FIG.31, the untreated seawater is fed to the filter 20 for separating microbes, thereby removing comparatively large microbes present in the seawater, and to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment and stored in the tank 5. The seawater circulates between the tank 5 and electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing bacteria present in the seawater. Thus the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is detoxified.

In the 32nd embodiment illustrated in FIG.32, the seawater stored in the tank 5 circulates between the tank and electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing bacteria present in the seawater. The chlorinated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment. The detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 33rd embodiment illustrated in FIG.33, the chlorine-containing substance injection unit 30 injects chlorine-containing substance in the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 for the chlorination, and the chlorinated liquid is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment. The detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 34th embodiment illustrated in FIG.34, a residual chlorine meter 11 measures the level of residual chlorine, i.e. chloride concentration in the treated seawater after the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination. The electrolytic current of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is controlled based on the measured residual chlorine level so as to control the amount of the sodium

hypochlorite to be produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4. Further the chlorinated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment. The detoxified liquid is discharged into the sea.

In the 35th embodiment illustrated in FIG.35, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 circulates between the tank and the electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing bacteria in the seawater. The chlorinated seawater is fed to the filter 20 for separating microbes by running the seawater through the filter 20, thereby removing comparatively large microbes. The detoxified seawater is discharged into the sea.

In the 36th embodiment illustrated in FIG.3, seawater is fed to the filter 20 for separating microbes by running the seawater through the filter 20, thereby removing comparatively large microbes, and the filtered seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment. The detoxified seawater is discharged into the sea.

In the 37th embodiment illustrated in FIG.37, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 circulates between the tank and the electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination, thereby killing bacteria in the seawater. The chlorinated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment, and then to the metal-catalytic treatment unit 31 for metal-catalyzing, and further to the active-carbon treatment unit 32 for removing trihalomethane, thereby killing microbes in the seawater. The detoxified seawater is discharged into the sea.

In the 38th embodiment illustrated in FIG.38, natural energy, such as a solar battery and wind power unit 33, is used as an electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 when the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit

4 for the chlorination and then to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment, thereby killing microbes in the seawater. The seawater circulates via the ballast water tank for detoxifying.

In the 39th embodiment illustrated in FIG.39, natural energy, such as a solar battery and wind power unit 33, is used as an electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 of the 27th embodiment (FIG.27) for the chlorination the seawater stored in the ballast water tank.

In the 40th embodiment illustrated in FIG.40, natural energy, such as a solar battery and wind power unit 33, is used as an electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 of the 32nd embodiment (FIG.32) for the chlorination the seawater stored in the ballast water tank.

In the 41st embodiment illustrated in FIG.41, a part of the untreated seawater is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 via a branching treatment line for the chlorination and returned to the treatment line. The part of the seawater circulates via the branching treatment line for the chlorination. The treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank 5 via the treatment line.

In the 42nd embodiment illustrated in FIG.42, the untreated seawater is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and stored in the ballast water tank 5.

In the 43rd embodiment illustrated in FIG.43, the seawater stored in the ballast water tank 5 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and stored in the ballast water tank 5. The seawater circulates between the unit 4 and the tank 5.

In the 44th embodiment illustrated in FIG.44, part of the untreated seawater is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination via the treatment line and outputted to a branching

treatment line and discharged into the sea.

In the 45th embodiment illustrated in FIG.45, the untreated seawater is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination and the chlorinated seawater is discharged into the sea.

In the 46th embodiment illustrated in FIG.46, a part of the untreated seawater circulates to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination via a branching treatment line and the seawater returned to the treatment line is further fed to the metal-catalytic treatment unit 31 for metal-catalyzing and then to the active-carbon treatment unit 32 for removing trihalomethane. The treated seawater is discharged into the sea

In the 47th embodiment illustrated in FIG.47, the natural energy, such as a solar battery and wind power unit 33, is used as an electric source of the seawater electrolytic unit 4 of the 43rd embodiment (FIG.43).

FIG.48 and FIG.49 are the system diagrams showing main treatment steps of the afore-mentioned embodiments.

In FIG.48, untreated liquid generally means water which needs to be detoxified, including seawater. (4801) to (4809) ~~The diagrams (1) to (9)~~ of FIG.48 show various combination of a mechanical shredding (mechanical treatment) for killing large microbes and chlorination by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for killing bacteria in the liquid. In FIG.48, sodium hypochlorite is shown as NaClO.

In (4801) the diagram (1), in the same manner as the first embodiment illustrated in FIG.1 the combination of the chlorination and mechanical treatment is applied to untreated liquid, thereby obtaining a multiplier effect from both of the treatments.

In (4802) the diagram (2), untreated liquid is chlorinated and then mechanical-shredded.

In (4803)~~the diagram (3)~~, in reverse order from ~~the (4802)~~
~~diagram (2)~~ untreated liquid is mechanical-shredded and then
chlorinated.

In (4804)~~the diagram (4)~~, untreated liquid is chlorinated by
injecting Cl_2 (chlorine) or sodium hypochlorite and then
mechanical-shredded.

In (4805)~~the diagram (5)~~, in reverse order from ~~the~~
(4804)~~diagram (4)~~, untreated seawater is mechanical-shredded and
then chlorinated by injecting Cl_2 (chlorine) or sodium hypochlorite.

In (4806)~~the diagram (6)~~, untreated liquid is chlorinated by
injecting sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic
unit 4 using an electrolytic unit circulation system as with the
4th embodiment and the chlorinated liquid is then
mechanical-shredded.

In (4807)~~the diagram (7)~~, in reverse order from (4806) ~~the~~
~~diagram (6)~~ untreated liquid is mechanical-shredded and then
chlorinated by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced by the
seawater electrolytic unit 4 as with the 4th embodiment.

In (4808)~~the diagram (8)~~, untreated liquid is fed to the
seawater electrolytic unit 4 for producing sodium hypochlorite and
then mechanical-shredded.

In (4809)~~the diagram (9)~~, in reverse order from (4808) ~~the~~
~~diagram (8)~~ untreated liquid is mechanical-shredded and then fed
to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for producing sodium
hypochlorite.

In (4810)~~the diagram (10)~~, the combination of chlorination
and mechanical-shredding is applied to untreated liquid and the
liquid is treated with active carbons for removing trihalomethane.

In (4811)~~the diagram (11)~~, the aforesaid combination of
chlorination and mechanical shredding is applied to untreated liquid

and then the liquid is metal-catalyzed.

In (4812) ~~the diagram (12)~~, the aforesaid combination of chlorination and mechanical-shredding is applied to untreated liquid and in the following order the liquid is treated with active carbons for removing trihalomethane and metal-catalyzed.

Next, in (4901) ~~the diagram (1)~~ of FIG.49 the aforesaid combination of chlorination and mechanical-shredding (including post-shredding treatment) is applied to the seawater and the treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank.

In (4902) ~~the diagram (2)~~ of FIG.49, the aforesaid combination of chlorination and mechanical-shredding (including post-shredding treatment) is applied to the seawater stored in the ballast water tank and the treated seawater is discharged into the sea.

In (4903) ~~the diagram (3)~~ of FIG.49, the aforesaid combination of chlorination and mechanical-shredding (including post-shredding treatment) is applied to the seawater stored in the ballast water tank and the treated seawater ~~returns?~~ circulates to the ballast water tank.

In (4904) ~~the diagram (4)~~ of FIG.49, natural energy, such as solar battery and a wind power, is used as an electric source for the chlorination.

We have described above the embodiments of the methods for detoxifying seawater and apparatuses thereof. However, the present invention can be widely applied to similar methods and apparatuses for detoxifying liquid containing microbes.

FIG.50 is a block diagram showing an apparatus for detoxifying the ballast water illustrating the 48th preferred embodiment. In the 48th embodiment illustrated in FIG.50, number 100 is a ship sailing at the sea 102 with a ballast water tank 5 mounted inside and number 50 is a on-land detoxification facility.

The on-land detoxification facility 50 comprises a seawater electrolytic unit 4 as the chlorination means and a mechanical treatment unit 3 as mechanical treatment means.

The mechanical treatment unit 3 is preferably a perforated-plate treatment unit, in which is provided a plate with a number of small openings facing the flow of seawater and microbes in the seawater are damaged by a turbulent flow of the seawater caused when the seawater passes through the perforated plate, thereby killing microbes present in the seawater. The mechanical treatment unit should not be limited to a perforated-plate treatment unit as long as a unit functions to damage microbes in seawater to kill microbes.

The seawater electrolytic unit 4 electrolyzes the seawater which has been mechanical-treated, for producing sodium hypochlorite by decomposing the seawater by an electric current. The sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 is injected into a treatment line (not shown in drawings). The detailed structure will be explained hereinafter.

A seawater intake line 200 connects the sea and a inlet of the on-land detoxification facility (an inlet of either the seawater electrolytic unit 4 or the mechanical treatment unit 3), and a seawater discharge line 210 connects an outlet of the on-land detoxification facility (an outlet of either the seawater electrolytic unit 4 or the mechanical treatment unit 3) and to the ballast water tank 5.

In the 48th embodiment, we will explain the detoxification in the case that untreated liquid is introduced through the seawater intake line and fed to the on-land detoxification facility 5 in the order of the mechanical treatment unit 3 to the electrolytic unit 4. However, the seawater detoxification can also be done in reverse

order, i.e. intake line→electrolytic unit 4→mechanical treatment unit 3.

In the 48th embodiment, untreated liquid introduced via the intake line 200 is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3.

The mechanical treatment unit 3 damages microbes in the seawater passing through the perforated plate, thereby killing microbes. The seawater treated mechanically by the mechanical treatment unit 3 is fed to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 whose detailed construction is explained in FIG.4. The seawater electrolytic unit 4 electrolyzes the seawater to produce sodium hypochlorite and inject the sodium hypochlorite to the seawater.

By the chlorination means of the seawater electrolytic unit, the sodium hypochlorite contained in the seawater circulating between the circulation line 47 and the electrolytic bath 41, is injected into the electrolytic bath 41, thereby lowering the pH level of the seawater being supplied to the bath 41 and preventing scale adhesion.

The detoxified seawater by the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 is stored in the ballast water tank 5 inside the ship via the seawater discharge line 210.

In this embodiment, the microbes are mainly those that are toxic or pathogenic or those that disturb ecosystems, such as zooplankton and its cyst, phytoplankton and its cyst, bacteria, fungi and virus.

The sodium hypochlorite in the above embodiment is most suitable as aforesaid chlorine-containing substance. However, chlorine, sodium, chloric acid, ion thereof or sodium chloride can be used.

The substance possessing oxidizing properties also include oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the

chlorine-containing substance.

Meanwhile, the chlorine-containing substance can be added externally as chemicals.

Also, in the 48th embodiment, the on-land detoxification facility 50 may comprise additionally a microbe mounting unit 020 (shown with a broken line in FIG. 50) mainly consisting of filter 20, backwash line 21, open-close valve 22 for controlling the opening of the backwash line 21 as shown in FIG.59, thereby removing large microbes present in the seawater when the seawater passing through the filter 20. In place of the filter 20, a centrifugal separator may be used.

It is also preferable to combine the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and the microbe mounting unit 020.

In the embodiment, the extinction of microbes of unlimited size can be securely achieved by applying the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes in the turbulent flow caused when the seawater passes through the perforated plate, combined with the chlorination for killing bacteria and the like by adding the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4. Thus a pressure drop of the mechanical treatment unit is abated and its pressure is reduced.

In the embodiment, the extinction of microbes of unlimited size can be securely achieved by applying the mechanical treatment for killing comparatively large microbes in the turbulent flow caused when the seawater passes through the perforated plate, combined with the chlorination for killing bacteria and the like by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4.

Further by adding the microbe mounting unit 020 (shown with a broken line in FIG. 50) mainly consisting of filter 20, backwash line 21, open-close valve 22 to control the opening of the backwash

line 21, a pressure drop of the mechanical treatment unit 3 is abated and its pressure is reduced.

With this structure, a less power is needed to operate the mechanical treatment unit 3 for purifying the seawater, thereby downsizing the unit with the smaller capacity. Moreover, the input of the sodium hypochlorite is reduced in the chlorination for killing bacteria to which chlorination is very effective.

Also, with the combination of the chlorination for killing bacteria by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 in the seawater, and the mechanical treatment by the mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing comparatively large microbes, the sodium hypochlorite is needed only for removing bacteria, thereby reducing the input of the sodium hypochlorite for purifying the seawater compared to the method in which sodium hypochlorite is used for removing both microbes and bacteria.

Accordingly, the residual sodium hypochlorite decreases drastically, preventing the corrosion of succedent units by the sodium hypochlorite during the detoxification, thereby improving the durability of the succedent units and suppressing marine contamination caused when discharging the sodium hypochlorite to sea.

In the 49th embodiment illustrated in FIG.51, the on-land detoxification facility is constituted by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for chlorinating the seawater by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced from the seawater, thereby killing microbes in the seawater. The mechanical treatment unit 3 for killing microbes is mounted in the ship 100.

According to the 49th embodiment, untreated seawater is chlorinated by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 constituting the

on-land detoxification facility 50, and the chlorinated seawater is fed to the mechanical treatment unit 3 provided inside the ship 100 for the mechanical treatment via the seawater discharge line 210 which connects the on-land detoxification facility and the ballast water tank inside the ship and then stored in the ballast water tank 5.

The rest of the structure and effect is the same as the 48th embodiment (FIG.50) and bear the same reference numerals.

In the 50th embodiment illustrated in FIG.52, in addition to the structure of the 49th embodiment illustrated in FIG.51, a ship-side seawater intake line 290 is provided on the body of the ship 100, having an inlet open to the sea and connected to the mechanical treatment unit 3.

In the 50th embodiment, the mechanical treatment unit 3 mounted in the ship 100 treats the seawater chlorinated by electrolytic unit 4 and also the seawater fed from the opening via the ship-side intake line 290 simultaneously and stores the detoxified seawater in the ballast water tank 5, thereby detoxifying large amount of seawater by the mechanical treatment unit of a simple structure.

The rest of the structure and effect is the same as the 49th embodiment (FIG.51) and bear the same reference numerals.

According to the 48th to 50th embodiments, untreated seawater is detoxified by the on-land detoxification facility for killing microbes in the seawater, which is constituted by the seawater electrolytic unit 4 or the mechanical treatment unit 3. The treated seawater is stored in the ballast water tank 5 via the seawater discharge line 210 connecting the on-land detoxification facility 50, to the ballast water tank 5 in the ship 100, thereby omitting the on-board installation of at least one of detoxification units such as electrolytic unit or mechanical treatment unit. Therefore,

the installation space on the ship for the detoxification apparatus is reduced, thereby increasing the loading space for cargo, etc.

Also, as the seawater discharge line 210 connecting the on-land detoxification facility constituted by the electrolytic unit 4, the mechanical treatment unit 3 or the like, can be disconnected and connected to every ship 100, one (one set of) on-land detoxification facility 50 can be used for the liquid detoxification of the ships 100, thereby raising the operation rate of the on-land detoxification facility, reducing the number of units mounted on each ship 100 for detoxification and thus lowering installation cost.

Further, in case that the detoxification apparatus constituted by the electrolytic unit 4 or the mechanical treatment unit 3, etc is located on-land, it is not necessary to install a new detoxification apparatus on existing ships 100 and the hull rework cost is minimized, thereby minimizing the cost for installing the detoxification apparatus on the ship.

It is also possible in the 49th to 50th embodiments to install the microbe mounting unit 020 shown in FIG. 50 with a broken line on the ship along with the mechanical treatment.

Also, in the 49th to 50th embodiments, the seawater electrolytic unit 4, mechanical treatment unit 3, microbe mounting unit 020 may be mounted on the land as the on-land detoxification facility or on the ship 100.

In FIG. 51 the electrolytic unit 4 maybe installed on the ship 100, and both or one of the mechanical treatment unit 3 and microbe mounting unit 020 may be installed on the land as the on-land detoxification facility 50.

In the 51st to 53rd embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 53-55, the on-land detoxification facility is mounted on a vehicle 220 so as to move freely on the land.

In the 51st embodiment illustrated in FIG.53, the on-land detoxification facility of the 48th embodiment is mounted on the vehicle 220 so as to move on the land 101 freely.

In the 52nd embodiment illustrated in FIG.54, the on-land detoxification facility of the 49th embodiment is mounted on the vehicle 220 so as to move on the land 101 freely.

In the 53rd embodiment illustrated in FIG.55, the on-land detoxification facility of the 50th embodiment is mounted on the vehicle 220 so as to move on the land 101 freely.

According to the 51st to 53rd embodiments, as the on-land detoxification facility 50 mounted on the vehicle 20 is moved close to the ship 100 freely and the seawater detoxified by the on-land detoxification facility 50 can be stored in the ballast water tank in the ship 100, the length of seawater feeding lines such as the seawater discharge line 210 can be minimized, thereby reducing the power for operating a feeding pump (not shown) and reducing the operating cost for detoxifying the seawater.

Also, according to the 51st to 53rd embodiments, when storing the detoxified seawater in the ballast water tank of the ships 100, the on-land detoxification facility 50 mounted on the vehicle 220 can be moved freely to each of the ships 100, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water.

The rest of the structure and effect is the same as the 48 to 50th embodiments and bear the same reference numerals.

In the 54th embodiment illustrated in FIG.56, ~~number 100 is~~ a ship 100 sailing in the sea 102 with a ballast water tank 5 mounted inside is shown, and ~~number 230 is a~~ facility mounting boat 230 is provided afloat and movable on the sea 102 with a at-sea detoxification facility 60 mounted thereon. —The at-sea detoxification facility is constituted by the seawater electrolytic

unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 of the same structure as the 48th to 53rd embodiments.

A seawater intake line 250 feed seawater from the sea to the at-sea detoxification facility 60, and a seawater discharge line 240 connects the at-sea detoxification facility 60 and the ballast water tank 5 inside the ship 100, feeding to the ballast water tank 5 the seawater detoxified by the at-sea detoxification facility 60.

In the 54th embodiment, untreated seawater is introduced through the seawater intake line 250 and fed to the at-sea detoxification facility 60 in the order of the mechanical treatment unit 3 to the electrolytic unit 4. However, the seawater detoxification can also be done in reverse order, i.e. electrolytic unit 4→mechanical treatment unit 3.

In the 54th embodiment, untreated seawater is fed through the seawater intake line 250 to the mechanical treatment unit 3 for the mechanical treatment as with the 48th to 53rd embodiments and then to the seawater electrolytic unit 4 for the chlorination. The seawater detoxified by the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 is stored through the seawater discharge line 240 in the ballast water tank 5 in the ship 100. Land 101 is also shown. ~~101 refers to on the land.~~

According to the 54th embodiment, the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 constituting an at-sea detoxification facility 60 are mounted on a facility mounting boat 230 provided movable and afloat on the sea 102. The untreated seawater is fed to the at-sea detoxification facility 60 for killing microbes and then to the ballast water tank 5 via the seawater discharge line 240 connecting the at-sea detoxification facility 60 and the tank 5 inside the ship 100. Therefore, the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3, etc. can be located on the

sea as the at-sea facility 60 and it is no longer necessary to install the units inside the ship 100, thereby reducing the space for installing detoxification apparatus and increasing the space for loading cargo, etc in the ship.

Also, as the seawater discharge line 240 connecting the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 which constitute the at-sea detoxification facility 60 provided on the boat 230, can be disconnected and connected to every ship 100. A single set of at-sea detoxification facility 60 can be used for a plurality of ships 100 for liquid detoxification of the ships 100. By this, the operation rate of the at-sea detoxification facility can be raised and the number of units mounted on each ship 100 for detoxification can be reduced, resulted in reduced installation cost.

Further, when carrying out detoxification of the seawater for a ship 100 anchoring off shore, the facility mounting boat 23 mounted with the at-sea detoxification facility 60 is moved near to the ship 100, and seawater detoxified by the at-sea detoxification facility 60 is fed to the ballast water tank 5 of the ship, thereby achieving the fast and efficient detoxification of ballast water for any ship anchoring off shore.

Furthermore, as detoxification units such as the seawater electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit mounted on the boat 230 afloat at sea can be set as at-sea detoxification facility, there is no need to provide detoxification units separately on the ship 100, thereby minimizing the hull rework cost of an existing ship 100 and minimizing the cost for installing the detoxification apparatus on the ship.

Also, in the 54th embodiment the at-sea detoxification facility may comprise the electrolytic unit 4 and one or both of the mechanical treatment unit 3 and microbe separation unit 020 for

removing microbes (shown in FIG.56 with a broken line).

As a modified example of the 54th embodiment, it is also possible to install the electrolytic unit 4 on the mounting boat as the at-sea detoxification facility 60 and the mechanical treatment unit 3 and the microbe separation means 020 on the ship 100.

As another modified example of the 54th embodiment, it is possible to install any combination of the electrolytic unit 4, the mechanical treatment unit 3 and the microbe separation means 020 on the sea as the at-sea detoxification facility 60 or on the ship 100.

In other words, the electrolytic unit 4 may be installed on the ship 100, and one or both of the mechanical treatment unit 3 and microbe separation means 020 may be installed on the boat as the at-sea detoxification facility 60.

In the 55th embodiment illustrated in FIG.57, the at-sea detoxification facility comprises the mechanical treatment unit 3 and electrolytic unit 4 as is in the 54th embodiment, and a second mechanical treatment unit 3 is provided on the ship 100.

In the 55th embodiment, the seawater treated by the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 of the at-sea detoxification facility is fed to another mechanical treatment unit 3 inside the ship 100 via the seawater discharge line 240. The seawater treated by the second mechanical treatment unit 3 is stored in the ballast water tank 5.

Structure and effect are the same as those of the 54th embodiment (FIG.51). The parts same as those of the 54th embodiment bear the same reference numerals.

In the 56th embodiment illustrated in FIG.58, in addition to the structure of 55th embodiment (FIG.57), the ship 100 has a ship-side seawater intake line 290 on the body, having an inlet open

to the sea and connected to the second mechanical treatment unit 3.

According to the 56th embodiment, the another mechanical treatment unit 3 simultaneously detoxifies the seawater previously treated by the electrolytic unit 4 and mechanical treatment unit 3 of and the seawater fed from the ship-side intake line 290, and the detoxified seawater is stored in the ballast water tank 5, thereby detoxifying large amount of seawater with the mechanical treatment unit of simple structure.

Structure and effect are the same as that of the 55th embodiment (FIG.57) and the same parts bear the same reference numerals. Other effects of the 56th embodiment are the same as those of 54th embodiment.

In the aforesaid embodiments, the seawater electrolytic unit 4 using an electrolytic unit circulation system as shown in FIG.4 is used as the chlorination means. However, it can be any unit having an chlorination function for killing microbes in the seawater by injecting the sodium hypochlorite produced from the seawater.

For an example, the seawater can be oxidized by an oxidizing means (not shown) by adding oxidizing substance to the seawater. The substance possessing oxidizing properties also include oxidants such as hydrogen peroxide and ozone, besides the chlorine-containing substance.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

As has been described in the foregoing, according to the present invention, the liquid detoxification method and apparatus can be provided for securely killing microbes of unlimited size without any strength drop on the side of treated liquid accommodation body and reducing the installation and operation costs. Further, the space for installing the detoxification apparatus for ballast

water in ships can be reduced, thereby increasing loading space for cargo, etc. Still further, on existing ships, the hull rework cost for installation of detoxification apparatus can be minimized.

ABSTRACT

Conversion of an untreated liquid to a clean harmless treated liquid through microbe removal, characterized in that a mechanical treatment for damaging microbes present in a liquid to thereby affect ~~effect~~—extinction thereof and sterilization, combined with a chlorination in which a chlorine-containing substance is formed from a liquid and injected into a liquid to thereby affect ~~effect~~—microbe extinction and sterilization, is applied to a liquid. There is further provided an electrolytic circulation system comprising applying a detoxification treatment for extinction of microbes in seawater and sterilization by means of detoxification facilities on land or on the sea to seawater introduced through a seawater introduction channel and accommodating the seawater having been thus treated in a ballast water tank. As a result, facility and operating costs can be reduced. Extinction of microbes of unlimited size and sterilization can be securely achieved without any strength drop on the side of treated liquid accommodation body. Further, the space for installation of detoxification apparatus for ballast water in ships can be reduced to thereby enable increasing of loading space for cargo, etc. Still further, on existing ships, the hull rework cost for installation of detoxification apparatus can be minimized.